

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1 and 12 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A tire/wheel assembly comprising:

a wheel having a rim;

a pneumatic tire mounted on the rim of the wheel, the pneumatic tire having a cavity; and

a noise reduction interior member disposed in the cavity of the pneumatic tire, the noise reduction interior member having left and right elastic rings fitted to the rim and an annular body attached between the elastic rings,

wherein the annular body is configured such that an annular cavity portion surrounded by the noise reduction interior member and the pneumatic tire has a cross-sectional area that varies in a circumferential direction of the tire,

wherein the annular body has a cross-sectional shape which varies in the tire circumferential direction, the annular body is formed by joining a plurality of annular body pieces into which the annular body is divided in a circumferential direction thereof, the annular body pieces have opposing leg portions, the opposing leg portions alternately protrude outwardly and inwardly of the respective annular body pieces from one body piece to the next adjacent body piece, and the noise reduction interior member is not adapted to support the wheel when the tire is punctured.

2. (Original) A tire/wheel assembly according to claim 1, wherein the cross-sectional area of the annular cavity portion varies in such a manner that a maximum cross-sectional area thereof is 2% greater or more than a minimum cross-sectional area thereof.

3. (Previously Presented) A tire/wheel assembly according to claim 1, wherein the cross-sectional area of the annular cavity portion varies periodically.

4-5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) A tire/wheel assembly comprising:
a wheel having a rim;
a pneumatic tire mounted on the rim of the wheel, the pneumatic tire having a cavity; and

a noise reduction interior member disposed in the cavity of the pneumatic tire in such a manner that the noise reduction interior member divides the cavity of the pneumatic tire into an inner cavity part and an outer cavity part, the noise reduction interior member having left and right elastic rings fitted to the rim and an annular body attached between the elastic rings,

wherein the annular body has a plurality of openings through which the inner cavity part and outer cavity part are communicably connected, the annular body having

regions equally sectioned in a circumferential direction thereof, the plurality of openings being unevenly distributed in such a manner that the regions have openings which are different in total opening area,

wherein the equally sectioned regions consist of four regions into which the annular body is equally sectioned in the circumferential direction thereof, the four equally sectioned regions consisting of two first regions having openings that are maximum in total opening area and two second regions having openings that are minimum in total opening area, the first and second regions being alternately placed, the total opening area in the first regions being 5% to 10% greater than the total opening area of the openings in the second regions, the first and second region openings having a length in the range of 3 mm to 6 mm.

7-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) A tire/wheel assembly according to claim 6, wherein the annular body has an outer surface, an entire opening area of all the openings on the outer surface of the annular body being 0.3% to 6.0% with respect to an area of the outer surface of the annular body.

12. (Currently Amended) A noise reduction interior member which is to be disposed in a cavity of a pneumatic tire mounted on a rim of a wheel, comprising:
left and right elastic rings fitted to the rim; and

an annular body attached between the elastic rings,

wherein the annular body is configured such that an annular cavity portion surrounded by the noise reduction interior member and the pneumatic tire has a cross-sectional area that varies in a circumferential direction of the tire, the annular body has a cross-sectional shape which varies in a circumferential direction thereof, the annular body is formed by joining a plurality of annular body pieces into which the annular body is divided in a circumferential direction thereof, the annular body pieces have opposing leg portions, the opposing leg portions alternately protrude outwardly and inwardly ~~of the respective annular body pieces~~ from one body piece to the next adjacent body piece, and the noise reduction interior member is not adapted to support the wheel when the tire is punctured.

13. (Original) A noise reduction interior member according to claim 12, wherein the cross-sectional area of the annular cavity portion varies in such a manner that a maximum cross-sectional area thereof is 2% greater or more than a minimum cross-sectional area thereof.

14. (Previously Presented) A noise reduction interior member according to claim 12, wherein the cross-sectional area of the annular cavity portion varies periodically.

15-16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) A noise reduction interior member which is to be disposed in a cavity of a pneumatic tire mounted on a rim of a wheel, comprising:

left and right elastic rings fitted to the rim; and

an annular body attached between the elastic rings,

wherein the annular body has a plurality of openings, the annular body having regions equally sectioned in a circumferential direction thereof, the plurality of openings being unevenly distributed in such a manner that the regions have openings which are different in total opening area,

wherein the equally divided regions consist of four regions into which the annular body is equally divided in the circumferential direction thereof, the four equally divided regions comprising two first regions having openings that are maximum in total opening area and two second regions having openings that are minimum in total opening area, the first and second regions being alternately placed, , the total opening area in the first regions being 5% to 10% greater than the total opening area of the openings in the second regions, the first and second region openings having a length in the range of 3 mm to 6 mm, and

the noise reduction interior member is not adapted to support the wheel when the tire is punctured.

18-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) A noise reduction interior member according to claim 17, wherein the annular body has an outer surface, an entire opening area of all the openings on the outer surface of the annular body being 0.3% to 6.0% with respect to an area of the outer surface of the annular body.

23. (Previously Presented) A tire/wheel assembly according to claim 1, wherein the annular body comprises four regions equally sectioned in the circumferential direction thereof and the four equally sectioned regions comprise at least first regions each making the cross-sectional area of the cavity maximum and at least second regions each making the cross-sectional areas of the cavity minimum which first and second regions are alternately arranged.

24. (Previously Presented) A tire/wheel assembly according to claim 23, wherein each equally sectioned region comprises a single annular body piece.

25. (Previously Presented) A noise reduction interior member according to claim 12, wherein the annular body comprises four regions equally sectioned in the circumferential direction thereof and the four equally sectioned regions comprise two first regions each making the cross-sectional area of the cavity maximum and two second regions each making the cross-sectional area of the cavity minimum, the first and second regions being alternately arranged.

26. (Previously Presented) A noise reduction interior member according to claim 25, wherein each equally sectioned region comprises a single annular body piece.